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ABSTRACT

In this report to the New York City Board of Education, Chancellor Macchiarola identifies the three overall goals of his administration: (1) a more accountable staff at every level; (2) a system more conscious of the need for productive use of current resources; and (3) students who achieve and value learning. With respect to his first goal, Macchiarola has acted on the physical deployment of supervisory personnel; reinforced the notion that tenure is not automatic but depends on merit; imposed appropriate standards for the granting of course credit for teachers; and increased the representation of minorities in the Board of Education workforce. The focus on productive resource usage has resulted in the extended use of school buildings; the decentralization of some improvement and repair functions; the development of a commercial law section to deal with suppliers and vendors; and an improved data collection system. To increase student achievement, transitional remedial classes and a program for the reduction of class size have been initiated. A program of diagnostic reading tests for elementary and junior high schools will be introduced, and additional funding has been allocated for high school remediation programs. The Chancellor feels that more attention is needed in the areas of bilingual education, guidance services, and vocational education. (RLV)

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MID-YEAR REPORT

OF THE
CHANCELLOR OF SCHOOLS
TO THE
NEW YORK CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
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FRANK J. MACCHIAROLA, Chancellor

JANUARY 1979

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I am pleased to take this opportunity to present you with some observations on what has been for me a very exciting six months as Chancellor of New York City's public schools.

I am grateful for the support of the members of the Board of Education, and for the commitment and competence of my colleagues within the system. I have been encouraged by the spirit of cooperation and constructive criticism that has marked the dialogue about public education in New York City during my tenure. And I am heartened by the optimism that exists in this City, an optimism which is essential if we are to advance the cause of our children.

Although I am pleased with the efforts and results of these six months, I know full well that there is much that remains undone. Public education in New York City -- while it is better than many of the critics contend -- is still in trouble. Too many of our students are being failed by the system; too many of those who should be serving our children are only serving themselves. True accountability and high standards still elude us. In fact, the path to the achievement of both true accountability and high standards has still not been set in many areas under my jurisdiction. We are still a long way from our overall objective: effective, efficient and economic delivery of educational services to children in New York City.

In more specific terms, I have identified three overall goals which I would like to achieve. These are:

(1) a more accountable staff at every level;

(2) a system more conscious of the need for productive use of current resources; and

(3) students who achieve and who value learning.

We are dependent, every one of us, upon the help of others, and the strength provided by a giving and sharing community is indispensable for New York City's children today.

In a system as large as ours, some may become so diverted by budgets, buildings and contracts that they forget that our primary mission is the education of children. The nature of this profession requires extra-ordinary effort on the part of all who are charged with the responsibility of nurturing children. As Chancellor of Schools, I have been invigorated by our students. I have become convinced of the need to make those of us who deal with children think more seriously and more solemnly of the effort.

Accountability

When I assumed the office of Chancellor, I asked for and received resignations from the professionals who served at the pleasure of the Chancellor. I acted to accept many of these resignations.

At issue was the ability to work as part of a collective effort in a changed environment. Many new executives have brought both strong executive leadership and team spirit to the school system. Deputy Chancellor Richard Halverson is a prime example of these qualities.

I created the position of Assistant to the Chancellor to permit me a fuller view of the immense and far-flung bureaucracy. These Assistants, all non-tenured, all serving at the pleasure of the Chancellor, provide me with a vantage from which I can judge the effect of particular practices and policies more fully.

I have tried to vary the assignments of the Assistants to the Chancellor and to provide flexibility to their duties. Several of them have already moved into line positions, indicating the critical importance to me of such positions within the system.

Another aspect of accountability that I have attempted to address concerns the physical deployment of supervisory personnel. The movement of central supervisors -- high school superintendents and special education supervisors -- into the field represents an effort on my part to have the greatest attention given to operations in the school. The telephone, in my view, has made the need for a concentration of executive personnel in one complex quite unnecessary. I believe that supervisors located in or near the schools they supervise will observe more and

will provide greater guidance to these schools.

In addition, I strongly believe that the overlay of services -- in fact what in other school systems might appear to be an abundance of riches -- may actually dilute the effectiveness of accountability. Thus, I am moving in the direction of locating responsibility for the success of students within the school building itself. And I am moving in the direction of making every supervisor focus on the responsibility that he or she has in making classroom learning more effective. The policy of relocating key supervisory staff in the field flows from that point of view.

Another aspect of accountability has involved the effort to insist that tenure decisions remain matters of professional judgment. There had been a tendency to view the grant of tenure as automatic, notwithstanding the very clear responsibility placed in the law for the system to judge tenure in terms of whether an individual deserves the award. This summer, I personally passed on the evaluation of candidates for supervisory tenure. A number of Principals and Assistant Principals in high schools and special education schools were denied tenure as were other supervisors. These were admittedly difficult steps to take, but they had to be taken because in my view the circumstances warranted such action. We cannot endeavor to evaluate our students and at the same time permit colleagues to escape similar evaluation. To do so denies basic justice to students

and to fellow professionals who then see minimally effective performance as the acceptable standard of the system.

At the same time that we require higher standards for staff, we also have the responsibility for professional development so that people can be schooled in the ways of achieving the higher standards we require. We can hardly be real educators if in the process of educating children we forget about educating ourselves. We have therefore acted to step up the process of staff development through a training program for newly assigned high school Principals, a thrust that will be continued with Assistant Principals as well. It is also my intention to expand the program so that community school districts will be able to have more intensive training programs to develop their supervisory personnel.

The accountability issue extends not only to our paid employees, but also to the Community School Boards. As a former school board member, I realize the value of the freely contributed services of the many community leaders who serve on Community School Boards. I have tried to work with the Community School Boards, recognizing through my own strong commitment to decentralization how essential these public servants are. At the same time I have acted in individual cases to inform some Community School Boards of my responsibilities under law and Board policy and to inform them of their duties in

particular situations where conflict appeared in the offing. Their cooperation and support in virtually every case has been encouraging. In one case, that of Community School District 5, I suspended the Board and that suspension remains in effect. Painstaking effort had been made to have Community School Board 5 understand its responsibilities, but in my view suspension was inevitable, given not only the Board's specific actions, but also its failure to recognize the dividing line between policy and administration, a failure recognized by a team of distinguished university educators who evaluated the work of Community School Board 5.

Accountability has been sought from the teaching staff as well. We have eliminated correspondence courses from among those for which increment credit for teachers would be given. This issue had been poorly monitored too and, I believe, the system was lax in not stopping the proliferation of fraudulent academic courses. We have imposed appropriate standards for the granting of credit and our right to refuse credit for fraudulent courses has been confirmed by the decision in a grievance proceeding which was recently won by the Board. It will be necessary for us to restore many of the prerogatives of management that have been surrendered inappropriately in several such fundamental areas. The matter of labor relations is most important, and we will be concentrating our efforts in this area.

While increasing accountability is one of the

most important activities for us to engage in, we should not forget that the effort will be fraught with considerable danger. Accountability must walk the very thin line between exacting appropriate standards of performance from staff while at the same time making certain that staff is not asked to account for matters beyond its control. While the problem may appear theoretically simple, much remains to be done in this regard. A major effort at a school improvement project, directed by Senior Assistant Ronald Edmonds, will attempt to make accountability something that can be shared by the entire school community. In this area we will build upon the long-standing Accountability Project.

Staff accountability has also begun to take shape through a more regularized system of reporting. For the first time the school system is participating in New York City's Management Reporting System. And what we report to the City must also be reported through the system in a much more organized and intelligible way. Reports to the Chancellor from the Executive Directors and from Directors of Offices have been made on a monthly basis, and this system will be phased into a fully developed management reporting system that will be operational by the beginning of the next academic year. In the meanwhile, all of the Divisions and Offices have been participating in workshops that have been set up for the implementation of the Management Plan. This improvement has been handled directly

by my office.

Another important change that has occurred has been the implementation of the Board's policy of November 1976 regarding the use of field titles at headquarters. An initial and urgent step in this direction was taken with the conversion of many field titles to the newly created Education Administrator series for headquarters personnel who were about to earn tenure in inappropriate titles. This was the first step in the conversion of these titles and we expect that the Education Administrator series will be fully in place during the next year. As you know, the matter has many difficulties -- policy, legal and union issues among them -- but we are working on their resolution.

Another significant aspect of the matter of accountability involves our effort to increase the representation of minorities within the workforce of the Board of Education. We have entered into agreements with the Office for Civil Rights to eliminate discriminatory personnel practices and discriminatory student placements. The matter of staff placement poses an immediate issue for us given the complex steps that must be taken if we are to accomplish agreed-upon goals. Apart from the agreement, I believe that the need to integrate our staff and to have an increased number of Blacks and Hispanics teaching within the school system are important objectives that we should be working toward. The policy of encouraging voluntary transfers

to promote integration and of assigning new teachers with a view toward considering the impact upon integration will aid in our efforts. In line with these objectives, I have also placed the Office of Equal Opportunity directly in a reporting relationship to the Chancellor. I have done so realizing that our effort at ending discrimination among staff and students is one of the most important undertakings for this administration.

We must confront questions of race and race relations. And we must recognize that when these matters are mixed with education, there can be severe damage to our society and to our school system if the matters are not handled judiciously. I sincerely believe that almost all of our professionals are committed to ending discriminatory practices within our school system. I believe that constitutional requirements must be seen as safeguards that a democratic society requires for its success. I intend to support all efforts to uphold the law and, in fact, to lead the effort to eliminate all forms of discrimination within the school system.

Resources

There is no question in my mind but that the public sector has been almost universally wasteful in the management of its resources. We have in many cases measured the success or importance of programs by the amount of money spent or by the numbers of persons employed. Such measures have actually

operated to drive expenditures upward so that at the present time our City leads major American cities in the per capita money spent by state and local government. Such a situation cannot continue if New York City is to be competitive. Indeed such a situation of waste is entirely at odds with the values that we teach and the values that we urge children to adopt. We must learn how to eliminate waste; we must learn how to use our resources more intelligently. And schools must lead in the effort. We have made a beginning in this regard. The census by the Division of Special Education revealed under-utilized facilities and staff and thereby located vacancies for special education students. Our review of the Bureau of Supplies has eliminated some wasteful practices, and we anticipate implementing additional economies.

In the budget message sent to you last month, I tried to speak both for economy and for new programs. The December conference with Federal, State and local educators around new federal legislation had as its major objective the more intelligent application of already available resources. Such efforts must -- and will -- be continued.

I have already spoken of the need to improve accountability, and indeed many of the improvements in accountability which have been made or which are being planned, will have, as a necessary by-product, a more intelligent use of resources. Still, this is an area that should be analyzed on its own.

I think we must make it clear to our fellow professionals and the community at large that schools and school facilities are important to children and to communities beyond the usual school days and beyond the usual school activities. We cannot simply provide 9:00 to 3:00 teaching service when our children have a severe need for dawn to dusk care. More single heads of household, more working mothers, less societal attention to the real needs of children and increase of child neglect and child abuse confront us in this, the International Year of the Child. On many occasions I have spoken about this issue because I believe it is one which society tends to overlook and one which threatens the well-being of the nation. Simply put, I believe that society has turned against children. And the teaching professions are not the walls of protection they ought to be. Less instructional time, less extra-curricular involvement, greater reliance upon the union contract as the standard of professional responsibility, less willingness to articulate values, the lockout of latecoming high school students, decreasing levels of student achievement, increasing truancy, increasing drop-outs and increasing pressure to maximize the severity of student discipline are facts of life. And many of us have contributed to the problem much more than we have contributed to the solution. All of this must change if our students are to be properly served.

At the same time, many of us have looked to an increase in budget as the format for change. This is not

realistic, and it is even more unrealistic as we face constricted governmental budgets in New York City and the need to direct dollars to the most effective public use. While I believe that we must seek greater funding -- asking for what is our due -- we are sorely mistaken if we believe that increased funding provides a solution to the problem of lack of commitment. To my mind, solution lies in an increased effort on the part of all, including and most especially the classroom teacher. There is no escape from the fact that the job of teaching is more challenging than it has ever been. There is no escape from the fact that the job of teaching requires greater talents and abilities than many of our teachers presently possess. Such a situation is a challenge for those of us who manage the system to do more to assist the classroom teacher in being more effective, more capable and more eager to accomplish what is a most difficult task -- helping children to learn.

The first line of duty of the school system as a system, however, rests not with the teachers. It rests with the administration in putting into place realistic standards against which teachers and students are to be judged, and in establishing and maintaining a system which attempts to assist the classroom teacher in the arts of instruction. We are cooperating with the United Federation of Teachers in the development of teacher centers, and the matter is most urgent.

I have been most troubled by the promotion of poor practice within the Board of Education as well as the failure

to provide more effective assistance to schools and school districts. We have not disseminated good school practice, and in fact have been most reluctant to highlight exemplary schools and programs. We have not only tolerated mediocrity, we have developed, congratulated, and promoted it.

In addition there has been limited attention given to the need of the school system for both an academic policy and an academic thrust to support that policy. I intend to act during the first months of the calendar year to make changes in the academic leadership under my direction. Some of these changes have already been effected with the creation of an integrated Office of Pupil Personnel Services. Irving Berchuck has been given a charge to make guidance, attendance, school safety and school health programs more effective and he has already begun work. But this is only a beginning. The reform here must be fundamental and it must be thorough.

In other areas of administration I also feel that a great amount still remains to be done. The most critical need of public sector management in general has usually been seen as the need for increased middle management staff capacity. I am convinced that the same is true for us. I see a major need for middle management particularly in units such as Pupil Transportation, Food Services, Auditor-General, and Personnel.

Our focus upon a more comprehensive use of resources has seen extended use of schools beyond the 9:00 to

3:00 setting. We have made greater use of school buildings through the restoration of some after-school and evening community center programs in each of the Community School Districts and in many of the high schools. We have increased the participation of students in the free summer lunch program, and we have extended participation in breakfast programs through the central management of programs where districts chose not to run them on their own. We expect to cooperate with city and state agencies in the development of a more comprehensive summer youth program, one which will focus upon school buildings as centers for youth activity.

Even in the matter of school closings, where the loss of student population virtually mandates such action, we expect to work closely with city agencies and with community groups to insure that school buildings are not abandoned in communities, leaving the impression that the worst neighbors in our troubled communities is the school system, which leaves derelict school buildings as its legacy. Even as we close buildings, we must direct additional resources to maintenance and repair efforts which have been neglected during the City's fiscal crisis.

Our present concern with asbestos in the schools reminds us that proper care of our facilities cannot be deferred indefinitely. It also serves to teach us that sound management practices can cope with the most urgent

and extraordinary dangers. The new Executive Director of the Division of School Buildings, Anthony Smith, is an example of such a competent and resourceful manager.

We are working with Community School Districts to decentralize some of the improvement and repair functions that have remained as part of the central operation. We are also working on a plan for the consolidation of our facilities, particularly warehouses, and we are also cutting back further on lease arrangements.

Another area sadly in neglect over many years has been our relationships with suppliers, vendors, builders and others with whom the Board of Education contracts. We have begun the development of a commercial law section in the Law Office, and we have taken more vigorous legal action against many contractors, particularly the bus contractors. Our effort to reform the bus contract system that is presently in place will create many problems for us, but we must proceed. Bus contractors have often been indifferent to the needs of children. They have taken full advantage of poorly drafted contracts to maximize their profits. The system can be properly characterized as a "rip-off" and it cannot be permitted to continue. We will have a tough job ahead of us, but we must act now to bring about necessary and major reform.

At the same time we have not been as efficient as we should have been in settling our lawful obligations. I see positive changes taking place in the area of Business

and Administration where, for instance, we are now vouchering accounts payable within the Division in 10 days, a dramatic improvement over 45 days, which was the rule last year. Virtually all of Business and Administration has seen positive and measurable change under the leadership of Lawrence Sussman, but given the dependence of Business and Administration upon other units within and outside of the Board of Education, the public's perception of this will be slow in coming. I have also begun to use Mr. Sussman in other areas of management throughout the system, such as the temporary relocation of the Bureau of Supplies within his Division.

In a related area, Personnel, Helene Lloyd has also begun the task of improving the efficiency of the system within a Division. She will be in a position to accomplish several new tasks, such as the voluntary transfer plan, continuing conversions of Certificates of Competency, the development of the Education Administrator series, and the development of improved record keeping within the Division.

We are developing data collection systems that will be useful to the business side of what we do as well as to the instructional side. Better resource management depends upon an increased capacity to use machine-readable data and we are far behind other school systems in this effort. I will be making this a priority. Even though it represents an additional investment for us, I believe that the payoff is

extraordinary. And I believe one of the measures of the success of this administration will be how well we adapt to the computer and how well we restructure our record keeping and our organization to take full advantage of the efficiencies and economies that this form of technology offers. The work of Richard Vigilante on the student and staff data side will be key, and the search for a director for the business side of this operation will be most important.

During this year, I have also worked quite closely with the Board of Examiners under the leadership of Jack Bloomfield. As long as this structure remains in place, and as long as the Board of Examiners stands ready to assist us in placing qualified staff in pedagogic positions, I believe that we should welcome the opportunity to work with them. The ability to satisfy both standards of academic excellence and equal opportunity which the Board of Examiners is willing to undertake should certainly be encouraged.

Student Achievement

Without doubt, the matter of gravest and most pressing importance is the problem of student achievement. Our schools produce too many students who can neither read adequately, nor do basic arithmetic, nor think clearly. Too many of our high school graduates cannot compete in the marketplace for the jobs they need. Far too many students do not even graduate. I am committed to demonstrable improvement in this area. And I insist that the system

rearrange its priorities to meet these problems of student achievement.

The program of transitional classes and the program of reduced class size in the first grade have been modest but promising first steps in that direction.

The transitional class program -- whereby held back students in grades 1, 2 and 3 are given intensive work in basic skills instruction in their own special classes -- represents a new approach for the school system. These children do not simply repeat a year, rather they spend another year, or part of a year, being taught what they were unable to learn the first time around. The distinction is an important one, for many professionals support "social" promotions because they do not believe that the simple repetition of a year is an appropriate learning atmosphere. We want to eliminate the choice between forcing a student to advance who should not advance or leaving a child back who should do more than simply repeat an unsuccessful year. Transitional classes offer a third choice. Preliminary evidence suggests that transitional classes benefit not only the students in these classes but also the students whose classes might have been diverted by the presence of inadequately prepared students. Unfortunately, only about one-third of those students who were eligible were served in transitional classes. We must attempt to reach all the children in need of these classes.

I believe that we must focus a great deal of attention on class size in the primary grades. Research supports both the fundamental importance of basic learning in the early grades and the value of class size reductions in those grades. Toward this end we have reduced class size in the first grade to a maximum of twenty-five. Unfortunately, we have not been able to take the further strides that we would like in this endeavor. The past year, however, has been important in representing a change in emphasis.

These basic primary grade reforms proceed from our philosophical position that all children are educable. The fact that no major urban school system has met this challenge cannot serve as an excuse. We must address our best efforts at precisely those children that many have decided cannot be properly educated.

My Senior Assistant for Instruction, Ronald Edmonds, is the person principally responsible for translating this philosophical position into educational programs. After careful study of the unique needs of the New York public schools, he is working to harmonize student needs, our new promotional policies and graduation requirements and the Regents minimum competency testing program.

Consistent with this philosophy, we will introduce this fall a program of diagnostic reading tests for all elementary and junior high school students. In addition, there will be diagnostic mathematic tests for some students

and screening for learning disabilities among kindergarten and first-grade children. What is particularly important about these tests is that they will relate to instructional strategies. We intend to provide an extensive teacher-training program so that teachers can make appropriate use of the diagnostic tests to meet individual learning needs. Without such back-up, our commitment is a sham.

In the upper grades, we have allotted an additional $3 million for high school remediation programs to help students who need to develop basic skills at the high school level. For those high school seniors who fail to achieve the Regents minimum competency standards, we will provide a special program of instruction.

Steps have also been taken to increase the amount of time students spend actually receiving instruction. Changes in school calendar and schedules have met considerable resistance, particularly among some high school principals. We have insisted upon an earlier start of the high school semester, fewer days to organize or reorganize classes, and greater need to justify time away from the classroom. The Division of High Schools now recognizes that it is not simply a resource, but also a change-agent for our high schools. Nathan Quinones' task is to promote good high school practice -- better attendance, increased instructional time, and greater student achievement.

One of the most pressing and difficult instructional

issues for our schools is the education of the handicapped. Changes in federal and state laws as well as our own sense of responsibility for handicapped children have confronted us with the most serious challenge. In all candor, it is a challenge we have not fully met. Too many professionals in the system have not recognized the rightful place of special education or have frustrated the implementation of necessary programs. Given the relationship of special education to the districts and to the schools, the management task is enormous.

Despite these obstacles, we have made some headway in special education. Taking a census of special education facilities enabled us to make fuller use of these resources, and establishing school-based evaluation teams has assisted us in identifying children with learning disabilities. Subcommittees of the Committee on the Handicapped are in place, and we now have an accurate assessment of the status of our waiting lists. In December, we exceeded our projections for the processing of evaluations, and we are confident that we now have taken the essential steps to master persistent backlogs. The development of a special education master plan will bring us into compliance with state guidelines, and as a result, the State Education Department has released the funds which had previously been held up.

Whatever progress we have made must be measured against the distance we still have to go. And anyone

familiar with this field knows that the distance is great. In no other area is there a need for greater urgency and commitment and vigilance than in special education.

We must also develop more sophisticated approaches to career education, both for our children and for adults. The expectation of young people for meaningful and adequately salaried positions in the City's economy must be supported not only by their confidence in their own basic skills, but also by their understanding of and preparation for the careers they choose. The linkages between schools and jobs must be strengthened. In this endeavor, we will be working closely with New York City businesses, large and small.

Directly related to this problem of career education is the structure of our vocational education programs. We do not at present have enough of these programs to meet student needs; we are turning away thousands of students every year who want to attend one of our vocational high schools. In addition, many of the programs offered in these schools are outmoded, ill-designed or poorly equipped. We have secured from the State of New York additional Vocational Education aid monies, which we will use to begin an expansion and updating of our offerings. Plans for internal structural change in vocational education will be forthcoming shortly.

Ours is an international city, and our programs in bilingual education are a reflection of the needs of our

cosmopolitan population. Because our bilingual programs are a late growth, they have developed unevenly. The philosophy of bilingual and bicultural education is not clearly defined, and many people, both in schools and out, do not understand the value of a bilingual education. We must pay more attention to those professionals who come with bilingual and bicultural backgrounds and who are therefore able to understand the children not only in pedagogical ways, but in terms of social and cultural needs as well.

Finally, our guidance services are, to understate the matter, deficient in extent and in quality. Many of our students never see a counselor in school; many who do are often not counseled wisely. The choices our students make to drop-out, to attend an inappropriate high school, to prepare for an inappropriate career and many similar choices of wrong option reflect our too frequent inability to advise them in timely fashion. Our counselors are too few, too heavily burdened and too poorly supported to provide the kind of service our children need. We must find ways of putting more counseling personnel into schools while keeping all counselors in touch with real student needs. Considerable attention will be directed toward the improvement of these services during the next semester.

Conclusion

I have tried to keep this report personal, frank and to the point. I have concentrated as much on what needs

to be done as on what has been done. After all, the Board of Education has been part of the process of change, and its members know much of what has been done. They also know, as do I, how well we have both been served by the attentive coordinating efforts of Joseph Saccente.

I have enjoyed the job; I have enjoyed your support; I have enjoyed our mutual commitment to open public meetings. Finally, I want to express my gratitude for your respect accorded to the distinction between policymaking and administration as well as for your commitment to improving education in the City of New York. At the conclusion of the school year, I will report in greater detail. I want now, however, to express to you my thoughts mid-way through my first year of office.